# Update Report for Maine

US Army Corps of Engineers
New England District

**Current as of June 30, 2000**

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## Mission



The missions of the New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers include flood prevention and control, emergency response for natural disasters and national emergencies, environmental remediation and restoration, natural resource management, streambank and shoreline protection, navigation maintenance and improvement, support to military facilities and installations, and engineering and construction support to other federal agencies. The six New England states cover 66,000 square miles, with 6,100 miles of coastline, 11 deep water ports, 102 recreational and small commercial harbors, 13 major river basins, and thousands of miles of navigable rivers and streams. The district operates and maintains 31 dams, 2 hurricane barriers and the Cape Cod Canal. We employ about 550 professional civilian employees, with about 400 stationed at our headquarters in Concord, Massachusetts. Other Corps of Engineers employees serve at Corps projects and offices throughout the region.

## Navigation

**WELLS HARBOR, WELLS (1st CD)** - The federal navigation project has been a source of contention and debate since its construction (1962-1970). The project is adjacent to the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge and lies within the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve. Environmental interests, particularly the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Maine Audubon Society, have long opposed further maintenance of Wells Harbor.

During review of the plans by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), opposition by environmental groups, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and some state agencies led to appeal of the state process to the Maine Board of Environmental Protection for adversarial hearings. Preparation for hearings, motions and process delays extended the review, and in 1997 hearings on the two projects were delayed for a second time. Following extensive negotiations with the various interests and parties to the state proceedings, a settlement agreement was executed by the town, Maine Audubon, S.O.S. Wells (beachfront property owners group) and the Wells Chamber of Commerce in 1998, in which the parties agreed to avoid further process and hearings in exchange for agreement to project changes.

The settlement presents revised harbor development, management and monitoring plans. The revised harbor plan, including a modified federal navigation project, was reauthorized by the 1999 Water Resources Development Act and consists of eight- and six-foot deep channels, six-foot deep anchorage and an outer harbor settling basin. *The town has received state and federal permits to dredge areas at the two town landings adjacent to the anchorage for access to municipal marina facilities.* The Corps and town projects would generate about 170,000 and 35,000 cubic yards, respectively, of clean sand which would be used to nourish adjacent eroding beaches in Wells.

The changes to the federal navigation project reduce the size of the federal anchorage (some of the lost anchorage capacity is replaced with expanded municipal marina facilities), relocates the inner harbor channel to the west side of the harbor, redesignates portions of the current channel and settling basin as anchorage, and creates a new settling basin in the outer harbor. The revised harbor plan would support a total fleet of 150 small craft, about 10 percent of which are commercial fishing boats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued its final approval for the project on March 21, 2000.

*A solicitation for bids to conduct the dredging was issued on May 17, 2000. It is anticipated that dredging will begin shortly after Labor Day. The Maine courts ruled in favor of the town in a lawsuit filed by a landowner on Wells Beach contesting use of the beach for the discharge pipeline route and disposal. The Town's condemnation order was affirmed, and the beach is now available for use in association with the dredging.*

**UNION RIVER, ELLSWORTH (2nd CD)** - The Union River federal navigation project, adopted in 1896, provides a channel six feet deep at mean low water (mlw), 100 to 150 feet wide, from Union River Bay upstream about 3.75 miles to Ellsworth. The project was completed in 1902 and was last maintained in 1911. The project serves a small mixed fleet of commercial lobster boats and recreational craft.

Maintenance dredging of about 60,000 to 90,000 cubic yards of material is proposed to restore a depth of five feet mlw, sufficient for the present fleet. A portion of the material is old saw mill waste (saw dust, bark slabs and edgings). The Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Fish & Wildlife Service have agreed that the material to be dredged is suitable for unconfined open water disposal at the historic disposal site in Union River Bay southwest of Tuppers Ledge.

A public hearing on the project was held by the Maine Department of Marine resources in Ellsworth in 1999. The State issued Water Quality Certification and Coastal Zone Management Consistency Concurrence for the project in February 2000. Discussions with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection focus on various concerns raised by state agencies, including restrictions affecting the dredging window due to Atlantic salmon and alewife populations. As the river is subject to icing, there had been concern that sufficient time be available for the construction period. A modified construction window of November 1 through April 15 to protect salmon and other resources has been agreed to by state and federal agencies.

**NARRAGUAGUS RIVER, MILBRIDGE (2nd CD)** - The New England District, in cooperation with the Maine Department of Transportation and the Town of Milbridge, is evaluating maintenance dredging of the eleven-, nine- and six-foot channel from Narraguagus Bay to the town landings and the six-foot anchorages at Milbridge. The project serves the commercial fishing and lobstering fleet, aquaculture operations, a fish packing facility, and a small recreational fleet. A dredged material suitability determination was prepared in 1998, after consultation with federal resource agencies. The shoal material in the federal project was determined to be suitable for unconfined open water disposal at the historic Narraguagus Bay Disposal Site.

Harbor use data provided by the town indicate the 11-foot channel need only be dredged to nine feet. The Corps, town and state and federal agencies held a teleconference in February 2000 to address state resource concerns for inclusion in the Environmental Assessment. New England District staff met with the town, state and Congressional staff in mid-December to resolve anchorage capacity issues. In response to a request from Congressman Baldacci, the Corps has prepared draft legislative language reauthorizing former project areas to resolve the need for additional commercial anchorage.

**PENOBSCOT RIVER, BUCKSPORT TO BANGOR (2ndCD)** – The federal navigation project includes a 22-foot channel to Winterport, 15-foot channel upriver to South Brewer and 14-foot channel upriver to the head of navigation at Bangor. The principal commodity is petroleum products carried by small tankers and barges.

The upper 15- and 14-foot channels have not needed maintenance in several decades. Pilots have expressed concerns about shoaling and the need for maintenance and/or improvement dredging in that area of the project and in the 22-foot channel. The City of Bangor established a working group to evaluate the feasibility and plan for channel and berth maintenance and improvement dredging, bulkhead repair and environmental cleanup. The New England District's assessment on possible navigation improvements found that improvement dredging is not economically justified, but that there is an apparent need for maintenance dredging. The state has written to add Penobscot River work to its priority listing of federal maintenance projects. Evaluation of need and, if warranted, initial sampling and testing of material will be conducted this year. We will work to support the state's objectives for this and other projects.

**BELFAST HARBOR, BELFAST (2nd CD)** - This project, which consists of a 15-foot harbor channel with adjoining 13-foot and 8-foot anchorage areas, was last maintained in 1970. The harbor serves a tug and pilot boat fleet serving Penobscot Bay, a small commercial fishing fleet and a fast growing recreational boating and charter fleet. The city is reviewing its harbor development plan to determine the future of the waterfront and fleet. The New England District is working with the city to help define both parties' roles in the harbor's future. The need for maintenance dredging of the channel and north anchorage has been established.

Biological test results indicate that the material proposed to be dredged from the channel is suitable for unconfined open water disposal at either the historic Belfast Bay Disposal Site or at the more distant Rockland Disposal Site. A suitability determination has been coordinated with federal agencies and the state. *Benthic sampling of the Belfast Bay Disposal Site has been conducted to help evaluate the feasibility of using it for this work.*

## Planning Assistance

**WATER USE MANAGEMENT PLANS (2nd CD)** – The Corps is preparing water use management plans for three Downeast river basins in Maine in cooperation with the State Planning Office and others. *The three river basins are the Pleasant, Narraguagus, and Mopang.* Base flows in each are being determined, as well as the impacts of blueberry irrigation on flows so that effects of irrigation on Atlantic Salmon habitat can be determined. Recommendations to minimize these impacts are being formulated as a key component of the plans. *Plans for all three basins are expected to be completed by August 2000.*

**COASTAL WETLANDS INVESTIGATION, PHASE I (1st CD)** - The State of Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) has requested that the Corps prepare a scope of work to identify and conduct preliminary investigations of possible wetland restoration sites along the coast of Maine. Coastal wetlands are degraded when bridges, culverts, and tide gates under roads and railroads restrict tidal flow to the wetland. The "Return the Tides" Project developed by the Conservation Law Foundation's Maine Advocacy Center is compiling an inventory of restrictive tidal crossings throughout coastal Maine.

The DOT is interested in identifying which of these sites are reasonable candidates for coastal wetlands restoration candidates. This information could be used to consider making necessary modifications to the facilities during future maintenance and replacement activities and for mitigation purposes. *The scope of work has been provided and is now under review by the Maine Department of Transportation..* If Maine should wish to proceed with the study, the effort will be cost shared 50/50 between the DOT and the Corps.

## Flood Plain Management

**MATAGAMON DAM (2nd CD)** – The Corps met in March 2000 with the Penobscot Indian Tribal government to begin scoping a project at Grand Lake Matagamon to reduce flooding downstream of the dam and enhance the ecology both in the lake and downstream. *The District is developing a scope of work for possible assistance under the Flood Plain Management Study program. The scope of work will be completed this summer, and work will be initiated in the fall.*

**MAINE HURRICANE EVACUATION STUDY** - This study is being conducted under a federally-funded program cosponsored by the Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The objective of the program is to provide information from which the state and local communities can develop/update preparedness plans for hurricanes. The National Hurricane Center completed the SLOSH (Sea, Lake, and Overland Surge from Hurricanes) modeling and presented the results to state and local emergency management officials in 1999. The New England District will use the results of the SLOSH model to produce hurricane inundation maps, evacuation maps, and a technical data report. Draft inundation maps will be delivered to the state for its use during the hurricane season.

## Flood Damage Reduction

**AROOSTOOK RIVER, FORT FAIRFIELD (2nd CD)** - The Corps awarded a construction contract in July 1999 for a flood control project to provide protection to the central business district of Fort Fairfield. The project will provide protection from flood waters and ice jams up to elevation 372.6 feet NGVD and features 2,550 linear feet of earthen dike and 290 feet of concrete retaining wall. A pumping station will handle the removal of interior drainage during a flood event. Construction began in September 1999. The estimated $6.5 million project is cost-shared 65% by the Corps and 35% by the Town of Fort Fairfield. *Additionally, an historic railroad station has been relocated as part of the project. New England District representatives met with town officials in February 2000 to convey the details of a plan to install a cutoff wall in the dike and to change the position of the toe drain of the project to combat poor geotechnical site conditions. These measures will address problems associated with a subsurface seepage path identified in the project area. The construction effort has resumed, with progress being made on the cutoff wall and toe drain. Completion is scheduled for December 2000.*

## Superfund Assistance

The New England District is the Corps of Engineers' total support agency for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region I (New England) program for those federal-lead projects assigned to the Corps by EPA. This includes responsibility for design and construction execution of remediation projects. In addition, the district is providing technical assistance upon request to Region I for other federal-lead projects assigned by EPA to private firms, as well as for some Potential Responsible Party (PRP) remediation. During the past few years, we have provided assistance support to EPA on projects in **Acton (1st CD), Lewiston (2nd CD), Saco (1st CD) and South Hope (1st CD).** Current activities are focused on:

**EASTLAND WOOLEN MILL SITE, CORINNA (2nd CD)** – This site is a 25-acre abandoned wool manufacturing facility that operated from 1912 to 1996. The facility is located in the center of Corinna Village. The East Branch Sebasticook River flows directly under a portion of the 175,000-square-foot mill complex. Soil, river sediments, and groundwater in the area are contaminated with chlorobenzenes (a class of compounds historically used in the wool dyeing process). The site was included on the National Priorities List by EPA in July 1999. The New England District has completed field investigations of soil, sediment, and groundwater as part of a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) and is currently designing the components of the removal action to eliminate the source of contamination. Total cost of the RI/FS and design is estimated to be about $3.5 million. Our remedial action contractor demolished mill buildings to allow access to contaminated soil early this year. We plan to begin construction of a roadway detour and river diversion in July to allow us to perform soil remediation activities during the fall of 2000. Total cost of the removal action is anticipated to be about $12 million, and work should be complete in fall of 2001.

## Regulatory Program

**PROGRAM INFORMATION AND STATISTICS -** *At the end of March, there were 214 active applications for regulated work in Maine. During April and May, 135 new applications were received. Final actions were taken on 177 applications, including four individual permits, 153 general permits, 17 not required, and no denials. The balance at the end of May was 172 active files.* The New England District routinely processes 95% of all permit applications in less than 60 days.

Department of the Army permits are required from the Corps of Engineers under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Corps reviews permit applications for work affecting navigable waters under our Section 10 authority and the discharge of fill material into all waters, including inland wetlands, under Section 404.

**PROGRAMMATIC GENERAL PERMIT** - The New England District has comprehensive Programmatic General Permits (PGPs) in place in each of the six New England states covering work with minimal impact on the aquatic environment. Up to 98% of all permits issued in New England are PGPs. The PGPs are based on the state thresholds for most categories of environmental impacts, and applicants generally need only file with the state. The federal screening is virtually transparent to applicants, and the PGP approval is either included in the state approval letter or mailed simultaneously. Applications appropriately covered under the PGPs are generally approved in under 30 days. Applicants have commented favorably about the simplicity, predictability and efficiency of the PGPs.

**BATH IRON WORKS EXPANSION (1st CD)** - The permit for the $225 million modernization and expansion of Bath Iron Works was issued, and construction is underway. This project is of great importance to the economy of Maine. The mitigation for the project included the removal of the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in Augusta. The permit for removal of the Edwards Dam was issued in 1999, and the dam was successfully removed last summer. This action drew national attention and reopened approximately 17 miles of river to original flow conditions and fish migration for the first time in over 150 years.

**AQUACULTURE** - Aquaculture is the controlled cultivation and harvest of aquatic animals and plants. Mariculture is the raising of such crops in the sea. Throughout the world, marine fisheries are in trouble. While the world's population and its appetite for fish are growing, wild fish stocks are shrinking. As the total worldwide marine catch continues to fall, the harvest from aquaculture is rising. Global demand for seafood is expected to grow 70% in the next 35 years, and aquaculture expects to meet that demand.

In Maine, aquaculture began in the 1970s and focused on the bottom culture of shellfish. In the 1980s suspended culture of shellfish, as well as pen culture of finfish (salmon and trout), began. Maine currently also supports a seaweed culture industry. Finfish culture, in particular, became highly controversial due to potential impacts to water quality, navigation, traditional fisheries, benthic habitat, and other public interest factors. The Corps formed a task force with a number of federal and state regulatory and resource agencies and developed a joint state/federal permit application form, siting guidelines and environmental monitoring guidelines. These work products were well received by the industry.

To date, the Corps has issued 70 permits for finfish farms; 12 permits for raft culture of shellfish; and 3 permits for seaweed culture. There are presently 22 salmon companies occupying a total of 45 sites; 12 shellfish companies occupying 19 sites; and 1 seaweed company occupying 1 site. Two applications are actively being reviewed at the moment by the Corps. A new development is “experimental aquaculture sites” where a grower will investigate a site’s potential with a small scale operation before committing to full scale production. The Corps and the resource agencies worked with the task force members to modify the Maine Programmatic General Permit to accommodate these minimal impact projects which are co-regulated by the state. To date, the Corps has approved 22 experimental projects.

The latest issue facing Maine's aquaculture industry, specifically the salmon industry, is the potential listing of Atlantic salmon in the downeast region of Maine as endangered. Farm-raised salmon may pose a risk to native fish in the nearby rivers. The Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries are working with the Corps and the industry to reduce any impact that listing could have. *The Corps held an initial meeting with the industry, the resource agencies, and the state on May 15, 2000 in Bangor to review possible permit actions. Further coordination is ongoing.*

**CRANBERRY PRODUCTION** - Since 1991, the Corps has issued approximately 35 permits for cranberry projects in Maine. No permits have been denied. Nine were individual permits, including the 900-acre cranberry development by Cherryfield Foods which is presently under construction, and 24 were general permits. Applications for small projects are evaluated under the Maine Programmatic General Permit (PGP).

## Conservation & Environmental Enhancement

**DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (DERP)** - This Congressionally directed program (PL 98-212) provides for an expanded effort in environmental restoration. It emphasizes the identification, investigation and cleanup of hazardous and toxic waste; unexploded ordnance; and unsafe buildings, structures and debris at current and former military facilities.

One hundred and eighty-one formerly used Defense sites have been identified in Maine. Investigations at 180 sites are now complete, including 92 where no work was found to be necessary. The remaining site, which will be scheduled for investigation in the future when funds become available, is Area Mike Bombing Range, **North Berwick (1st CD).**

A site inspection, to determine if contamination is present, is complete at the former **Dow Military Airfield (2nd CD).** Investigated were the former salvage yard, fire pit training area, and dump site at the end of the runway. Contamination found does not pose a significant risk, but future evaluation is being considered.

The remedial investigation was completed at **Dow Military Airfield Helicopter Pad, Bangor (2nd CD).** Additional ecological sampling, involving surface water, sediment, and fauna, in an adjacent drainage area was conducted. *The final report was completed in June 2000 and found no further work is required at this time. However, contamination levels in a drainage ditch around the helipad were found to be slightly higher than background levels. These will be addressed after the state has defined its cleanup goals for the overall Dow Military Airfield site.* A supplemental remedial investigation at the former **Dow AFB (2nd CD)** underground storage tank locations will be conducted when funding becomes available.

A contract for further investigation and/or monitoring at the **NIKE LO-13, Caswell; Loring AFB Com Annex #2, Perham, and Loring AFB Laundry Annex, Presque Isle (all 2nd CD)** sites was awarded in 1998 for $110,106. *The second round groundwater sampling was done in May, and a report is scheduled for summer 2000.*

Field work is complete for the Remedial Investigation at the **Air Force Radar Tracking Station in Bucks Harbor (2nd CD)** to determine the extent of soil and groundwater contamination. *A feasibility study has been initiated to evaluate alternative drinking water sources which includes a public water supply as one of the alternatives for affected residents.* Bottled water continues to be provided to residents affected by this groundwater contamination. Quarterly residential well sampling is being conducted by Roy F. Weston.

If necessary, a site assessment report will be initiated this fiscal year at the former Fort Preble, **South Portland (1st CD)**, subject to funding availability. A site investigation confirming the existence of TCE (trichloroethylene) at the Nike 58 Site in **Caribou (2nd CD)** was completed in 1999. The February 2000 report cites a recommendation to install bedrock wells. *A contract for the recommended actions is scheduled for award shortly, and work is slated for later this summer or early this fall.*

**CONSTRUCTION** - Roy F. Weston has demobilized from the former **Naval Fuel Depot, Long Island (1st CD)**. Cleanup of contaminated buildings and soil is complete, with the exception of contaminated soil along a reach of pipeline believed to be the responsibility of others. Weston submitted a closure report in 1999. USACE has had discussions with the state DEP and will meet with the current property owner and town officials in the near future to resolve the contaminated soil and other closure issues.

Construction contracts, totalling nearly $2.7 million, have been completed at:

**First District**
Great Diamond Island, **Portland**
Thompson's Point, **Thompson**
Peak's Island, **Portland**
Forts McClary and Foster, **Kittery**
Jewell and Peaks Islands, **Portland**
Fort Baldwin Military Reservation, **Phippsburg**
Gerrish Island Fire Control Station, **Kittery**
Merriam Point Fire Control Station, **Portland**

Fort Preble, **South Portland**
Former Fuel Depot, **Long Island (Portland)**
**Cape Elizabeth** Fire Control Station
Fort Levett on **Cushing Island**
Fort Preble in **South Portland**
Former Fuel Depot, **Long Island**

**Second District**
Dow Military Air Field, **Bangor**
**Charleston** Air Force Station
**Bangor** Ammunition Storage Annex
Former **Presque Isle** Air Force Base
Former **Caswell** Air Force Base
Loring Air Force Base Outer Marker Annex, **Fort Fairfield**
Laundry Annex, **Presque Isle**
Communications Annex, **Perham**
Nike Site LO-31, **Limestone**
Nike Site LO-58, **Caribou**
Nike Site LO-85, **Connor**
Nike Site LO-13, **Caswell**
Presque Isle Air Force Base, **Presque Isle**
Air Force Radar Tracking Station, **Bucks Harbor**

## Special Studies

**COASTAL AMERICA -** Coastal America is an interagency partnership aimed at coastal resources restoration. The New England District serves as chair of the Northeast Regional Implementation Team (NERIT) of Coastal America. *The NERIT has been supporting the NRCS and other agencies in its efforts to remove obstructions to anadromous fisheries migration and restore degraded wetlands.*

**PRESUMPSCOT RIVER AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION (2nd CD)** - The New England District has completed a draft feasibility investigation for the lower Presumpscot River in Cumberland County, in the Town of **Falmouth.** The investigation examined the feasibility of removing the Smelt Hill Dam and adjacent non-functioning hydroelectric structures. The removal of the dam will eliminate the impoundment behind the dam as well as the barrier to upstream and downstream migration of anadromous fisheries, improve the riverine habitat for anadromous fisheries migration and spawning purposes, provide an anadromous fisheries corridor for other species than the present smelt population, and produce an ecological increase in the quality and quantity of riparian habitats. The removal of the dam and adjacent structures will restore a natural river ecosystem and significant fishery and recreational values and will enhance water quality in the Presumpscot River. *A draft report will be released in July 2000.*

**SEBASTICOOK RIVER AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION (2nd CD)** – The New England District is preparing a preliminary plan to restore anadromous fish to the upper Sebasticook River Basin. This would be accomplished by providing fish passage or breaching at a total of three dams. Two of these dams are located in the Town of Newport, one at the outlet of Sebasticook Lake and the other about 2,000 feet downstream on the East Branch Sebasticook River. The third dam is located at the outlet of Plymouth Lake in the Town of Plymouth. *A preliminary restoration plan is scheduled for completion in early summer.*

**SCARBOROUGH MARSH (1st CD)** – The New England District has been requested by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to initiate the preparation of a preliminary restoration plan for Scarborough Marsh in Scarborough (letter dated 23 February 2000). *The plan is scheduled for completion in July 2000.*